



start

AMAZING GRACE

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

If anyone’s story has made a difference in the way others come to know God, it is John Newton’s. Born in the early 1700s, John was the son of a commander of a merchant ship; he grew up sailing the Mediterranean Sea with his father. After his father retired, John continued to sail on voyages as a midshipman until being demoted to seaman for desertion.

His life seemingly took a turn for the worse when John became the servant of a slave trader, working on a slave ship. However, John worked his way up the ranks until he became a commander of his own slave ship. John had completely given up on any religious notions he might have gleaned from his mother as a child. He grew to be a hateful, cynical man lacking in moral goodness.

This was his story, until it changed as fast as the weather on the open seas. John Newton was returning on a homeward voyage when he ran straight into a violent storm, causing him to squeeze out a cry for help: “Lord, have mercy on us!” Later that night, after the storm had subsided, John quietly reflected about his encounter with God. The seeds of grace that were planted in his heart that night, May 10, 1748, grew, and he turned his life completely around. As a result of his experience he penned the words to the hymn “Amazing Grace.” This is the original version of the song. Read it and see if you can’t sneak a peek into this man’s story in a new way.

Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That sav’d a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev’d;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ’d!
Thro’ many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
’Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.
The Lord has promis’d good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.
Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.
The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who call’d me here below,
Will be forever mine.

Key Text: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday’s portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.

>> _____

1

Sunday
HERE’S WHAT I THINK

- >> Fifteen-year-old Cynthia called the other day with a heavy heart. She doesn’t feel as if she has a close walk with God because she can’t remember a specific moment when she gave her life to Him. “I know I have asked God into my heart so many times, but that’s the way it has been all my life. I feel as if my commitment to God would be better if I had never been raised as a Christian.”
- >> How do you know when you’ve really given your life to God? Cynthia is listening right now and waiting for encouragement, insight, or good advice.
- >> Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be upfront and honest. Say what you think.

2

Monday
WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

- >> “In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering.”—Howard Hendricks, current U.S. author, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary.
- >> “T. H. Huxley, a well-known agnostic, was with a group of men at a weekend house party. On Sunday morning, while most of them were preparing to go to church, he approached a man known for his Christian character and said, ‘Suppose you stay at home and tell me why you are a Christian.’ The man, knowing he couldn’t match wits with Huxley, hesitated. But the agnostic said gently, ‘I don’t want to argue with you. I just want you to tell me simply what this Christ means to you.’ The man did, and when he finished, there were tears in Huxley’s eyes as he said, ‘I would give my right hand if only I could believe that!’”—Our Daily Bread, January 24, 1993.
- >> “A 1980 Gallup poll indicated that out of all evangelical American believers, only two percent had introduced another person to Christ.”—J. K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin (Discovery House, 1992), p. 140.
- >> Definition of a witness: “A witness is someone who by explanation and demonstration gives audible and visible evidence of what he has seen and heard without being deterred by the consequences of his action.”—S. Briscoe, current U.S. Baptist pastor.
- >> “God forbid that I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them.”—George Whitefield, 18th-century English Methodist revivalist.

Write your own quotation.
What I say is . . .

>> _____

3

Tuesday
SO WHAT?

- >> When the children of Israel were on the edge of the Promised Land, they received instruction from God on what to say when their teens went crazy and demanded to know the meaning of all this church stuff. You can read it in **Deuteronomy 6:20-22 (NIV)**, “In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?’ tell him: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household.’”
- >> God was saying, “When the kids cry out for answers, give them your story. Give them the blow-by-blow story of the plagues. Tell them about walking through the Red Sea. Try and recount the way manna fell from the sky. Tell them your story.” God’s great answer to the questions teens ask is not a sermon or a lecture. It’s not a 10-step list for making good choices or some logical debate on truth. The answer is not a quiz or a test—but a story. Your story. Stories about what God has done for you are the most effective witnessing tool available.

5

Thursday
WHAT DOES THIS
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

- >> Have you ever noticed how athletes can be superstitious? They commence with a variety of senseless rituals so as not to jinx their imminent good fortune. In the same way, some people who have mountaintop experiences or a spiritual awakening don’t want to do anything to ruin the moment. They cling to a feeling and hope it never goes away. The demon-possessed man, after being healed by Christ, jumped in the boat and was clinging to Jesus, begging the Lord to let him stay by His side. Clearly, he was afraid that as soon as Jesus left, the demons would return and he would go back to the horrible life he had been rescued from. But the words of Christ are as sure today as they were for that man long ago: “‘Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed” (**Mark 5:19, 20, NIV**).
- >> Can you imagine how people would be changed by such a testimony? One of the ways we experience consistency and growth in our lives is by simply telling our story. Not only does it then live in another person’s mind, but it awakens new life in our own. Try it. Tell someone about what God has done for you. Describe how you feel about God’s mercy and grace. Write it in a letter if you have no one to tell, but do something. Your walk with God will change when you share what the Savior has done for you. No doubt.

Friday
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- >> If you had to choose five events of your life that have made a big difference in who you are today, what five stories would you tell?
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

4

Wednesday
GOD SAYS . . .

- >> **Isaiah 43:10-12 (NIV)**
“‘You are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed—I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘that I am God.’”
- >> **John 20:30, 31 (NIV)**
“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- >> **Psalms 66:16 (NIV)**
“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.”
- >> **John 21:24, 25 (NIV)**
“This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”
- >> **Mark 5:18-20 (NIV)**
“As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, ‘Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.”
- >> **1 John 1:1-4 (NIV)**
“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.”

6

- >> The following is a simple outline to help you construct your own personal testimony, your story about you and God. It’s important to be as specific as possible with your stories.

My Life Before I Encountered God

My Encounter With God

My Life as a Result of an Encounter With God

